BRAZILIAN CLAY PRODUCTION OVERVIEW: SITUATION AND PERSPECTIVES

MOTTA, J. F. M., CABRAL JR, M.(1) VALARELLI, J, V. (2) SOUZA SANTOS P. (3) Technological Researches Institute of SP State - IPT- (2) IGCE - Universidade Estadual Paulista - Unesp (3) Escola Politécnica da Universidade de São Paulo - USP

Brazil is currently one of the major world producer of clay material including common clays, kaolin, plastic and ball clays, fire clay, bentonites and fuller earth. Common clay accounts for the biggest production (around 70 million tpa) to supply heavy ceramic manufacture, cement plants, and some floor tile industries. These clays come mainly from ancient sediments, such as a Paraná basin pelitic belt alongside southeast and southern regions and secondarily from alluvial plains. Kaolin (1,3 million tpa) comes from tertiary sediments, in the Amazon region and goes to paper industry, as a filler and coating, and a minor amount is produced from weathered magmatic rocks and are used for whiteware ceramics. The plastic and ball clay account for, probably, 1 million tpa, to support wall and floor tile manufacture, sanitaryware and others whiteware ceramics. Plastic clay are found in small quaternary deposits, and some in Permian-carboniferous sediments. Minor production of clays is related to Ca-Bentonite and fuller earth (150.000 tpa), fire clay and others. Excluding kaolin, that is exported worldwide, all the clay materials are exploited to supply domestic demand. This paper deals with the present situation and trends of the Brazilian clay production and demand and discusses its perspectives within the Brazilian geologic environment.